

Name: Dr. Peter C. Houk

Category of Nomination: Outstanding Scientific Advancement of Knowledge

Justification for Award Recognition:

Dr. Peter Houk has resided in the Saipan, CNMI for over ten (10) years. While in Saipan, he has been focusing most of his coral reef research in the Northern Mariana Islands nearshore reefs and the Saipan Lagoon. He was employed with the CNMI Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for nine (9) years. While at DEQ, Dr. Houk worked at updating the long-term marine monitoring plan for the CNMI. The new monitoring plan that he developed assessed the health of coral reefs throughout CNMI and the Saipan Lagoon. The CNMI's long-term monitoring plan is now in the process of being standardized throughout Micronesia and American Samoa. While at DEQ, he was requested by the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency to help them develop a monitoring program for American Samoa using the CNMI model.

Dr. Houk's efforts to improve the CNMI's plan to monitor coral reef health in the CNMI, continues to be implemented by the CNMI Government even after his departure from DEQ. He has moved on to work for his nonprofit organization, Pacific Marine Resource Institute based in Saipan so that he can work with other non-governmental organizations throughout Micronesia including American Samoa. His research and work in the Northern Marianas resulted in management decisions that helped the CNMI move towards better planning and management of their reefs.

His time in CNMI has resulted in numerous scientific journal articles and he's been invited as an editorial reviewer for *Coral Reefs and Marine Biology*. Below is a list of his journal articles on his work in the Pacific.

1. Houk, P. and Wiles P. *In Prep*. Water quality and herbivory interactively drive resiliency patterns on Pacific coral reefs.
2. Houk, P. and Raubani J. 2010. *Acanthaster planci* outbreaks in Vanuatu coincide with oceanically-derived chlorophyll blooms, furthering consistencies throughout the Pacific Ocean. *Journal of Oceanography*. 66:435-438.
3. Houk, P. and R. Camacho. 2010. Dynamics of seagrass assemblages in the Saipan Lagoon. *Botanica Marina*. 53: (pages in press).
4. Houk, P. and J. Starmer. 2010. Constraints on the diversity and distribution of coral-reef assemblages in the volcanic Northern Mariana Islands. *Coral Reefs* 29:59-70.

5. Houk, P. and R. van Woesik. 2010. Coral assemblages and reef growth in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. *Marine Ecology*. 31:318-329.
6. Houk, P. and R. van Woesik. 2008. Changes in the Saipan Lagoon since 1959: toward understanding causal effects. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 356:39-50.
7. Houk, P., Bograd, S. and R. van Woesik. 2007. The transition zone chlorophyll front can trigger *Acanthaster planci* outbreaks in the North Pacific Ocean: historical confirmation. *Journal of Oceanography* 63(1):149-154.
8. Houk, P. and R. van Woesik. 2006. Coral Reef Benthic Video Surveys facilitate Long-Term Monitoring of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: towards an optimal sampling strategy. *Pacific Science* 60(2):177-189.
9. Houk, P., Didonato, G., Iguel, J. and R. van Woesik. 2005. Assessing the effects of non-point source pollution on American Samoa's coral reef communities. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* 107:11-27.

Name: Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA)

Category of Nomination: Outstanding Public Awareness and Education

Justification for Award Recognition:

Formed in May 2005, the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA) is a community-based non-profit organization comprised of people dedicated to the conservation of the diverse natural resources of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). MINA's board of directors consists of a diverse group of 7 members working in both government and the private sector. The formation of MINA was prompted by the following beliefs:

- The CNMI has remarkably diverse, unique, and beautiful natural resources that benefit its residents and visitors in profound ways;
- This natural heritage is at risk of continued degradation and merits immediate action;
- Community involvement in the conservation and management of CNMI's natural resources is crucial to the long-term preservation of these resources;
- Non-government organizations can provide needed community involvement; and
- A community-based group dedicated to biodiversity conservation in the CNMI can contribute in very meaningful ways to the long-term protection of CNMI's natural heritage.

Among MINA's accomplishments is the Teachers Environmental Camp that started in 2007 and still ongoing to introduce basic principles of coral reef ecology to 10-20 teachers each summer. These teachers, taken as a whole, teach 2,740 students at the elementary, middle, and high school level on the three main islands of the Marianas, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Since 2007 to present, MINA has introduced basic coral reef ecology to 80 teachers and over 10,000 students.

Other outstanding public awareness projects are *Take the Right Route* and *Walk it Don't Drive It*. These projects encourage the community to be more mindful about climate change and adapting to it. *Take the Right Route* project encourages carpooling, bicycling or walking to work or school. The *Walk It Don't Drive It* project educates the community to keep their vehicles off the beach to prevent the destruction of turtle nesting habitats and sediment runoff onto nearby reefs. MINA has also worked on closing vehicle access to several beaches by installing barriers and vegetating eroded beach areas to prevent further sedimentation runoff from entering coastal waters.

In its most recent work, MINA is working to establish a culture of island recycling with their marine debris project and minimize debris from entering into waters enriched with coral reefs.

MINA has found that beach clean ups alone are not the answer to the marine debris problem. The barrier to proper waste disposal must be addressed as well. In response MINA proposed to place conveniently located recycling and mixed waste bins for public use.

Fabrication of 11 weather resistant recycling and mixed waste bins have been placed in Saipan's most popular beaches, dive and picnic sites. MINA started the Adopt-a-Bin program with the business community to sponsor each bin. All 11 recycling and mixed waste bins have been adopted and each adopter agreed to clean up their sites on at least two occasions and pay for one year's worth of trash collection services.

Volunteers have also been trained to promote an island culture of proper waste disposal and recycling. Volunteers spend a few hours each week on the beach engaging visitors and asking them to use public recycling and trash bins and educating them about the impacts to marine life from these debris'. MINA is also providing class room presentations to teach elementary, middle and high school students about the hazards posed by marine debris and how to prevent their contribution to this problem. Elementary students attending classroom presentations on Marine Debris Prevention are asked to pledge their time to show family, friends and neighbors how to recycle. The Litter Patrol is also asked to volunteer time to set up recycling stations during family picnics and other gatherings.

MINA is deserving of a U.S. CRTF award for their exemplary efforts to educate the public about the ongoing environmental issues in the CNMI. The effort made to raise awareness has multiplied in all levels and ages in the community, and they have set examples to guide the CNMI community in implementing best practices to protect their environment and natural resources from ridge to reef.

Name: Bill Millhouser

Category of Nomination: Outstanding Management

Justification for Award Recognition:

The U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC) nominates Mr. Bill Millhouser, a former employee in the NOAA Coastal Zone Management Program, for a USCRTF Award. Throughout his distinguished career, Bill provided outstanding management leadership and dedicated service to NOAA, and to the U.S. coral reef and coastal zone management communities. Bill recently retired from NOAA after 34 years of public service.

Among his numerous accomplishments, Bill provided invaluable support and assistance to resource managers in the seven U.S. coral reef jurisdictions in the development and implementation of Local Action Strategies (LAS), contributing greatly to more effective on-the-ground coral reef management. Notably, Bill worked closely with the AIC as an active partner, fully supporting the AIC's coral reef initiatives.

Bill's contributions to the protection and conservation of coral reef ecosystems in each jurisdiction significantly enhanced our understanding of management of these threatened marine resources by facilitating and strengthening the enabling conditions for effective management action.

Bill's many years of experience working on coastal zone issues were also invaluable in our collective efforts to establish more effective policy and implement management actions to protect coral reef ecosystems. He provided sage advice on ways to increase public awareness of key issues. He was a collaborative team player who worked effectively with colleagues in the Pacific and the Caribbean regions to aid coral reef management efforts. But possibly most importantly, he had a wonderful sense of humor and was fun to work with!

In recognition of his commitment and contributions to preserving the world's coral reefs for the benefit of the local communities who depend on them, and on behalf of the AIC, I nominate Bill Millhouser for a U.S. Coral Reef Task Force award.

Category of Nomination: Outstanding Management

Name: Mr. Albon Ishoda

Justification for Award Recognition:

a. Impact on advancing management, research fields, public awareness, policy

Albon's work in the NGO and gov't sector, coordinating and sustaining movement in an otherwise challenged environment, has assisted the RMI to attract international attention, in the way of funding and expertise to the islands. The Nature Conservancy, Micronesians in Island Conservation, and Pacific Islands Marine Protected Area Community have provided both technical and leadership skills in RMI, that Albon learned from and used to support communities. Albon continues to lead the many communities that are requesting assistance from gov't and NGO's partners to engage in conserving their resources, local governments are moving forward with management planning, and private business are becoming engaged in conservation work.

b. Sustained effort of work

Albon has been a tireless leader since the 90's firstly in making change with the community fisheries program in Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority, helping to develop the interagency Coral Advisory group and bringing conservation to local communities in the Marshall Islands. As momentum built in mid 2004 and beyond, he was a huge proponent for the gaining upper level support for the Reimaanlok protected area strategy and played an instrumental role in lobbying for the LifeWeb International Climate Initiative funding acquisition by TNC & MCT on behalf of the MC. He has since become spokesperson to Micronesia Challenge as focal point for a period of time, and now with Climate Change Convention and Parties to the Nauru agreement, continues to engage his political leaders in his recent MICS Executive Director role. MICS's reputation and track record has been gaining steadily since his arrival including building the organization, funding, building strategic partnerships and the like. MICS is now known as the main organization supporting facilitation of the Marshaleese communities going through the Reimaanlok process with assistance from MIMRA and RMIEPA, where the Reimaanlok process has become a model for similar island communities across the region.

Name: Ms. Berna Gorong

Category of Nomination: Outstanding Community Level Participation

Justification for Award Recognition:

a. Impact on advancing management, research fields, public awareness, policy

Over the past 10 years, Berna has been predominantly volunteering to coordinate the establishment of the Nimpal Channel Conservation Area planning committee, with Kadai Community and Cultural Organization's partnership. The conservation area planning group included members from both Okaw and Kadai community including the traditional chiefs who govern the use of the resources. The idea of preserving this channel whose resources are both villages, is to conserve fish for the future. This channel both inside the reef and outside is habitat for a spectacular array of marine life including reef sharks, turtles, bumphead parrotfish, napoleon wrasse, and manta rays. She has engaged her own community by involving them in decision making, helping to set up a community based enforcement program, hiring locals as conservation officers, and attracting significant donor attention to continue funding the work. EU Conservation and Environmental Protection Program enabled the project to use a new approach to Yap's traditional marine resource management. First, 2 villages joined efforts to care for their resources when traditionally it was always 1 village taking care of its own marine area. Second, both men and women worked together to implement the project. Traditionally, men and women's roles are segregated whereby the men care for the marine area while the women care for the land. The success of the famous enforcement platform that is manned every night by villagers, continued to attract the attention of German LifeWeb Climate Initiative Funding and Packard funding as the project is moving from sea towards the land with the partnership of Pacific Marine Institute and Palau International Coral Reef Center.

b. Sustained effort of work

Through her own community civic leadership she helped organize the Kadai Community and Cultural Group, who have been working on preserving traditional culture and providing a venue for tourism in her community. Concurrently, she also produced Yap's State's newspaper to educate and inform the public. Since her time with Yap Networker, a newspaper (80's?) dedicated to sharing community achievement and encourage civic collaboration, Berna Gorong has been building momentum in Yap Island by sharing lesson learned galvanizing partnerships and bridging groups together with common interests. With Nimpal, the success she has had in grant making and project management to continue to secure vital funding to continue the development of the site is uncanny for a new MPA site such as this. Her perseverance and dedication continues to be a role model for women of Micronesia, for resource managers, and

for community members in every village.

c. Creating a foundation upon which others can build

This community led initiative has been a model for other sites in Pohnpei and beyond, both Pacific Islands Marine Protected Area and Locally Managed Marine Area Network have supported capacity building measures to ensure that the appropriate technical expertise is in place to lead Nimpal into the future. The Nimpal group is developing sustainable financing tools such as ecotourism ventures to create a renewing source of income to support the community enforcement section and continued resource monitoring activities of the site. These partnerships are all a result of Berna's unyielding ability to build coalitions between people and organizations that can assist her communities conservation and cultural mission.

Name: Yap Community Action Program (Yap CAP)

Category of Nomination: Outstanding Community Level Participation

Justification for Award Recognition:

The Yap Community Action Program (Yap CAP) was founded in 1979, in Yap State, FSM with the goal of helping rural communities raise their standard of living. But in recent years, with the many complications of modern life pounding on Yap's shores, its mission has grown as the demands on those same communities have grown. With its mission *"to operate or support programs aimed at environmental and cultural preservation and other sustainable economic and social development programs in the pursuit of self-reliance for all Yap citizens"*, Yap CAP is equally dedicated to protecting and conserving Yapese island environments and culture. Yap CAP's motto, "Building Environmentally Friendly Communities," reflects their commitment to balance community development with environmental conservation.

The focus of Yap CAP's environmental activities is providing support for environmental initiatives on Yap. The agency serves as the Secretariat for the Environmental Stewardship Consortium (ESC) founded in 1999 to coordinate all environment related projects and programs amongst the various government agencies/offices, private sector, NGOs and communities on Yap. Community participation and support for any proposed project is vital on Yap as nearly all land and near-shore reefs are privately owned, and Yap CAP serves to provide a bridge between the village communities and government. As such, Yap CAP's goals include:

- 1) Implement the Yap Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to ensure the preservation of Yap's unique environment.
- 2) Work with communities to identify and develop environmental projects, and then link communities with the appropriate government agencies to aid implementation.
- 3) Seek funding for environmental projects identified by community groups and other environmental agencies, and administer and regulate the funds.

Just this past month, Yap CAP, the island of Yap, and Micronesia as a whole lost one of our leaders in conservation, Mr. Charles Chieng, Executive Director of Yap CAP at the time of his death. An award for Outstanding Community Level Participation by the USCRTF would be a fitting tribute to Charles, the whole Yap CAP staff, and their work with the communities of Yap.

Name: Micronesia Conservation Trust

Category of Nomination: Outstanding Management (with an emphasis on Sustainable Finance)

Justification for Award Recognition:

The Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), formally established in 2002, is a charitable and irrevocable corporation organized to manage and provide funds for the accomplishment of the following mission: “to support biodiversity conservation and related sustainable development for the people of Micronesia by providing long term sustained funding.”

The goals of MCT are to:

- Raise community awareness about biodiversity conservation and related environmental education programs;
- Support the conservation of priority natural biodiversity resource areas; and
- Strengthen the ability of communities, community organizations, government agencies, conservation and development NGOs, and other appropriate organizations to conserve Micronesia’s biodiversity and sustainably manage its natural resources for the benefit of future generations.

MCT is the region’s only conservation trust fund, and works with local resource owners, traditional leaders, and local governments to develop and fund project proposals that focus on improving management and addressing key threats to the highest priority ecological sites designated through science-based and collaborative planning processes, such as National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans.

In 2006, MCT was selected as the financial mechanism for the Micronesia Challenge (MC), has since fully regionalized its Board and organizational structure and services and serves as one of the key regional, international, and US Federal agencies and organizations, that together form the MC Regional Support Team (RST), pulled together to provide a higher level of support of the MC, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to significantly “ramp up” biodiversity conservation efforts in Micronesia.

Since the organization’s inception, MCT has provided grants to and coordinated the following:

- Raised community awareness about biodiversity conservation and related environmental education programs across Palau, FSM and RMI
- Coordinated the Micronesians in Island Conservation (MIC) and Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC) Learning Networks, strengthening the ability of over 100 professionals, communities, community organizations, government agencies, conservation and development NGOs, and other appropriate organizations to conserve Micronesia's biodiversity and sustainably manage its natural resources for the benefit of future generations.
- Operated several 'advised funds' which are re-granted to relevant conservation community projects. These include approximately 7 million dollars in the last five years from donors such as the German Ministry of Environment, US Department of Interior, US NOAA, the Non-State Actors Funds from the European Union's Economic Development Fund (EDF9) to the FSM, alongside funds from other foreign governments and private foundations.
- Launched the MC endowment at over \$2.2 million and secured additional pledges in the amount of \$11 million. The capitalization of the endowment for the MC has provided a targeted, yet flexible and accessible, source of direct finance for conservation initiatives and projects, implemented by individual agencies and institutions, both Governmental and civil society, and in partnership with the communities and interests at the site-level.
- Funded and worked with partners on numerous projects including such activities as the establishment and management of protected areas, eradication of invasive species, and watershed protection and restoration.

Name: Ms. Peggy Denney

Category of Nomination: Outstanding Community Level Participation

Justification for Award Recognition:

Peggy Denney is the backbone of recycling on Guam. She envisioned the iRecycle program from the start and has now turned it into a successful program that includes a level of business participation, government-supported activities, student-led initiatives and community awareness and involvement that no other program on Guam can claim. This program has successfully taught many sectors of Guam's community about recycling and the importance it has for the island environment and our coastal and ocean resources. The iRecycle program under her direction is one of the best examples of positive community participation.

The concept was simple from the start. Businesses built and sponsored recycling bins for many school. Students, parents and community members brought aluminum cans to the bins for recycling. Those cans were picked up by the businesses and shipped off for recycling. The money generated from the recycling is then given back to the schools in check form. During this process the schools also incorporated Peggy's presentations about the importance of recycling and how trash could become marine debris that affects Guam's ocean and coastal environment.

The program has now expanded to include partnership with other community groups. The Guam Running Club, Boy Scouts of Guam and other nonprofit groups have sought out iRecycle to help them incorporate recycling into their events. Many 5k runs have recycling bins due to Peggy and the program. Carnivals, parades and almost every community gathering includes iRecycle due to Peggy's hard work, outreach and networking skills.

Her work for the past three years has created a network of people, groups and businesses on GUam that care about recycling. She started the the community of Guam down the road of recycling and the movement is picking up speed as more join the efforts. For example, within the last year she has sought out a partnership with a local car dealership to provide a vehicle to haul recyclables for community groups. Peggy also arranged for a partnership with a local bank to help continue the financial management of this multi-partner program.

The iRecycle program has pushed Guam in a direction where trash will become recyclables and the community will be behind the effort. Although we may still be at the first steps, we are off to a good start thanks to Peggy Denney.

Name: Governor Felix P. Camacho, Guam

Category of Nomination: Special Recognition of Outstanding Leadership

Justification for Special Recognition:

The U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC) nominates Governor Felix P. Camacho, the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) member for Guahan, for special recognition of his outstanding leadership to conserve coral reef ecosystems.

Governor Camacho has provided outstanding leadership and made significant contributions to the protection and conservation of coral reef ecosystems in Guahan, throughout Micronesia, the Pacific, nationally and internationally. Working with colleagues in both the Pacific and the Caribbean regions, he has created a strong foundation for the future conservation of coral reef ecosystems for the global community.

Governor Camacho's consistent support of the AIC and the Task Force, and his strong leadership over the past eight years, have contributed to more effective policy and implementation of management actions to protect coral reef ecosystems and increased public awareness of the key issues, at local, national and international levels.

He has consistently emphasized the need for key federal agency Task Force members to work closely together with jurisdictional, national, and international partners to manage these threatened coral reef ecosystems. He has recognized the need to develop resilience to serious threats to coral reefs such as climate change, and has encouraged initiatives to mitigate these threats. Under his leadership, the Territory of Guahan has developed and implemented a number of local action strategies to conserve coral reefs.

In 2009, Governor Camacho provided leadership in his testimony on behalf of the people of Guahan and the AIC in support of the reauthorization of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 to the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife, House Natural Resources Committee, U.S. House of Representatives. His testimony highlighted the significance of coral reefs for the Guahan community and as the backbone of the tourism industry that drives the economy.

As one of the original founders of the Micronesia Challenge in 2006, he has provided exceptional leadership and support for the management of these threatened marine resources.

The Micronesia Challenge is a commitment by the Chief Executives of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to

effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020.

A vast Pacific seascape nearly the size of the continental United States, Micronesia contains some of Earth's richest variety of plant and animal life. The region's highly diverse marine and terrestrial resources are the natural capital for local people, who are traditional stewards of their lands and waters.

In recognition of his outstanding leadership, commitment and contributions to protecting the world's coral reefs, the AIC nominates Governor Felix P. Camacho for special recognition by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.